

Amendment s to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Previously presented) An apparatus, comprising:
 - a) a first framer;
 - b) a 2:1 multiplexer to receive an inbound signal from the first framer, the 2:1 multiplexer having a first input coupled to the first framer;
 - c) a first mutliplexer to receive at least one signal from a second framer, the 2:1 multiplexer having an input coupled to an output from the first multiplexer; and
 - d) a second multiplexer to receive at least one signal from the second framer, the second multiplexer having an output coupled to an input of the first framer for an outbound signal.
2. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first framer is a SONET framer.
3. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the signal corresponds to an STS-1 signal.
4. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first framer has n inbound signals and n outbound signals.
5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein n is equal to 3.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein n is equal to 12.
7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein n is equal to 48.
8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein n is equal to 192.
9. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first framer is an SDH framer.
10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the signal is an STS-1 signal.
11. (Currently amended) A networking system having a first framer logic unit and a second framer logic unit, ~~each of the first~~ first framer logic ~~units~~ unit further comprising:
 - a) a framer;
 - b) a 2:1 multiplexer to receive an inbound signal from the framer, the 2:1 multiplexer having a first input coupled to the first framer;
 - c) a first mutliplexer to receive at least one signal from the second framer logic unit, the 2:1 multiplexer having an input coupled to an output from the first multiplexer; and
 - d) a second multiplexer to receive at least one signal from the second framer logic unit, the second multiplexer having an output coupled to an input of the framer for an outbound signal.
12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the framer is a SONET framer.
13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the signal corresponds to an STS-1 signal.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the framer has n inbound signals and n outbound signals.
15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein n is equal to 3.
16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein n is equal to 12.
17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein n is equal to 48.
18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein n is equal to 192.
19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the framer is an SDH framer.
20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein the signal is an STS-1 signal.
21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein each of the framer logic units corresponds to a line interface card.
22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the first and second framer logic units are coupled together through a backplane.
23. (Canceled)
24. (Canceled)
25. (Canceled)
26. (Previously presented) An apparatus, comprising:
 - a) a first framer;
 - b) a 2:1 multiplexer that receives an inbound signal from the first framer;

c) a first multiplexer that receives at least one signal from a second framer, the 2:1 multiplexer having an input coupled to an output from the first multiplexer;

d) a second multiplexer that receives at least one signal from the second framer, the second multiplexer having an output coupled to an input of the first framer for an outbound signal; and

e) a third multiplexer that receives at least one signal from the second framer, the third multiplexer having an output coupled to a routing or switching engine that forwards packets received from the third multiplexer output onto another signal.

27. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the first framer is a SONET framer.

28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the signal corresponds to an STS-1 signal.

29. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the first framer has n inbound signals and n outbound signals.

30. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein n is equal to 3.

31. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein n is equal to 12.

32. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein n is equal to 48.

33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein n is equal to 192.

34. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein the first framer is an SDH framer.

35. (Original) The apparatus of claim 34 wherein the signal is an STS-1 signal.